

**Legislative Testimony
Appropriations Committee
Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments
HB 5037 An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30,
2023
February 23, 2022**

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Dr. Kevin McLaughlin. I am an oral surgeon and have been practicing dentistry in Connecticut for over 30 years. I have been involved with organized dentistry since dental school in the late 70's. I have seen how both the state and the dental community deal with the Connecticut's less fortunate.

I am writing in regards to the Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments for the Department of Social Services and the proposed increase to adult dental Medicaid reimbursement rates.

I have been a Medicaid provider for most of my career but lately I have chosen not to be a provider due to costs. For many years I took care of patients and have been reimbursed at most 30% of my normal fee, sometimes as little as 15% or not covered at all. My overhead is a little less than 50% (most general dentist overhead is 65%) so it was a financial loss but it was my duty as a health care provider so it was acceptable. Today the fees are even less. The pediatric fees are better than adult fee so that you might break even. This is acceptable since at that point we are only donating our time.

I know the state has financial issues but most are due to pensions, expensive insurance plans and excessive handling of government. The government is there to help the people of the State of Connecticut not to help the government. This is a larger issue which I believe our governor has the business and political acumen to solve ***but the health of our citizens should not be delayed.*** Please consider raising the fees at least to the point where the health care community is breaking even. I know all dentists want to help all patients. If we don't see these patients then they just go to the emergency room who cannot treat them either and refer these patients to overloaded emergencies dental clinics which are very few these days. The irony of this is that that emergency room visit is paid for and just adds to another problem with the health care system.

I know many issues are not straight forward in government; but this one is. Should we provide no care for Connecticut's poor? That is essentially what is happening. The answer is obviously no.

I thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of this important issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

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